



USAID
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CROATIA

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

National Park Program



USAID Croatia

U.S. Ambassador Ralph Frank visits Paklenica National Park on the Adriatic coast. Ten interns designed and produced two interpretive panels: Paklaric-viewpoint and More than Meets the Eye. In addition they developed a blue print for the Paklaric trail (archeological trail) and the small Karst brochure.

Implementer: U.S. National Park Service,
U.S. Department of Interior

Partners: Ministry of Environmental
Protection and Physical Planning;
Paklenica National Park, Plitvice Lakes
National Park, Krka National Park, Mljet
National Park and Lonjsko Polje Nature
Park

U.S. Agency for International Development
www.usaid.gov

Project completed 2003

In 2001, USAID funded the “Jobs in the Parks” training program in Paklenica National Park and Plitvice Lakes National Park, implemented by the U.S. Department of Interior’s National Park Service in cooperation with the Ministry of Physical Planning and Environmental Protection. This program offered training in several aspects of park management including park interpretation for youth aged 18–25 for a ten-week period. In 2002, the activity was extended to include the Mljet and Krka National Parks and Lonjsko Polje Nature Park.

Training participants were selected for their qualifications in a range of disciplines related to nature preservation and park management. Advantage was given to returnee youth. Participants attended workshops conducted by three specialists from the U.S. National Park Service, under the leadership of Superintendent Douglas Morris of the Shenandoah National Park. Interns worked in teams to carry out priority projects identified by the Park Managers and completed a series of interpretive projects at each park. “Jobs in the Park” is part of the U.S. Government’s ongoing effort to help revitalize Croatia’s economy and promote new employment for young people (including returned refugees) residing in the war affected areas. Development of Croatia’s national parks is seen as an engine of economic growth, job creation, and tourism promotion in these regions.

Results A total of 50 young interns developed professional skills for future careers and provided over 16,000 hours of temporary help at the national parks. Permanent staff at each park were also trained. Several of the interns and one project coordinator received permanent positions in the parks.

Interns at each national park produced interpretive panels. At Plitvice Lakes and Krka National parks interns also produced a Junior Ranger Book and Teacher Guide for school children visiting the park.

At the Lonjsko Polje Nature Park, interns developed information panels and posters for the parks as well as guides for visiting children and teachers. Graduates of the training program in Lonjsko Polje Nature Park developed two interpretative panels for the Cigoc stork village, a curriculum-based guide for teachers accompanying school children visiting the parks, a self-guided nature trail brochure, and signposts for trail users.